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ABSTRACT

The role of the public has generally been dismissed as a significant factor influencing the process of curriculum formation in large urban school districts. This paper presents an indepth case study focusing on the role of the public in curriculum formation in one school district over a 21-year period during portions of the tenure of 3 superintendents. From June 1955 to July 1976, each proposal for curriculum change that was made to the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Board of School Directors was identified as well as the source of the proposal and the results of action taken by a board committee or the total board. For each proposal, verbatim records of committee and full board meetings were perused and all official documents and other written records were studied. On the basis of these data, a basic outline of all curriculum changes was compiled. Individuals knowledgeable of the process of curriculum decision-making were interviewed. This study suggests that those proposing change were heard and, in a number of cases, their proposals were adopted. (MLF)

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Public Participation in the Process of Curriculum Formation in the Milwaukee Public Schools July 1955-June 1976

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The role of the public (non-school district employees such as school board members, parents, students, individual citizens and organized groups) has generally been dismissed as a significant factor influencing the process of curriculum formation in large urban school districts (Ziegler, Jennings, and Peak, 1974). Generally it is the alleged unresponsiveness and insularity of urban school districts which is emphasized and criticized. For example:

> The reforms of the late 19th and early 20th centuries had successfully consolidated control of the public schools in the hands of a corporate and professional elite. The thrust of educational demands of blacks and other minority people, of women and of the political activisits of the 60s and 70s was to provide a meaningful equality of access to public schools for all citizens (and through the schools access to the goods society had to offer); to reform the public schools so that they were more directly responsive to the citizens they were supposed to serve; and to establish alternative forms of education, both public and private. (Molnar, 1985, p. 17)

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 16-20, 1986).

Were the public schools unresponsive to the public prior to the 1960s and 1970s? How did they respond to pressures for curricular changes during the 1960s and 1970s? Far too often these questions have been discussed without a proper data base from which to draw conclusions. There are very few studies focusing on how local districts responded to public proposals for changes. Often studies focus on a limited time period or a limited type of curriculum change. In order to adequately assess the impact of the public on curriculum change, appropriate data are needed to make scholarly discussion of school district responsiveness a meaningful venture. This paper presents a prototype of an in-depth case study focusing on the role of the public in curriculum formation in one school district over a 21 year period during portions of the tenure of three superintendents. It is understood that similar data from a representative number of districts would be needed to give scholars sufficient data to generalize about the role of the public in the process of curriculum formation and to generalize about school district responsiveness to proposals from the public (Baruch and Callaway, 1985).

This study illustrates one approach to gathering data regarding school district responsiveness to public proposals for curriculum change. The data analyzed and presented were gathered as part of an in-depth study of factors affecting the process of curriculum formation in the Milwaukee Public Schools from June 1955 to July 1976 (Baruch, 1982). For this time period, each proposal for curriculum change which

was made to the Milwaukee Board of School Directors was identified as well as the source of the proposal and the results of action taken by a committee of the Board or by the total Board. For each proposal, verbatim records of committee and full Board meetings were perused and all official documents and other written records were studied.

On the basis of these data, a basic outline of all curriculum changes was compiled. Analysis of these data allowed identification of those individuals who might have valuable information regarding the process whereby curriculum decisions were made and those individuals were interviewed to the extent practical. The analysis of these data made it possible to compare the number and types of decisions and to study the process by which curriculum decisions were made over a 21 year period during the tenure of the three superintendents. The emphasis of this discussion is on a limited aspect of the data gathered--specifically how the Milwaukee Public Schools responded to curriculum proposals emanating from the public. Hence, successive four-year periods (and one-year of Dr. Lee McMurrin's superintendency) are discussed.

Public Participation--June 1955-July 1959

Harold Vincent became Superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools in July of 1950. Increasing birthrates, annexation, immigration from the South, and rapid city development causing overcrowded schools combined to necessitate a major school building

program. In fact, 44 building projects were completed during the 1950s. During the 1960s, 25 new school buildings were built, 40 buildings were modernized, and 20 received minor additions.

The average daily enrollment of the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), which had been 68,607 in 1950, had grown to 101,242 by June 1960. By 1967, 127,048 pupils attended MPS schools (Lamers, 1974). The Milwaukee Board of School Directors had 15 members during this period. Each School Board director had the right to introduce a proposal by means of a resolution. Any community member could make a proposal through a correspondence to the Board which either referred such written requests to a committee or placed them on file.

The formation of a Division of Curriculum and Instruction in 1956 was the major curriculum event of these years in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Important innovations of these years included initiation of an experimental television instruction program and a pilot program for students of superior ability.

Generally, the public accepted the professional judgment of the staff in these years. However, the policies initiated were also in accordance with public wishes. For instance, Superintendent Harold Vincent, citizens, and even union representatives were very enthusiastic about the possibilities of educational television. The decision to eliminate the popular four-year-old kindergarten was met with much disappointment. Superintendent Vincent explained that lack

of space necessitated this regrettable decision which was accepted by the Board of School Directors and the public.

Superintendent Vincent's response to Sputnik was also in line with community feelings. The implementation of a program for students of superior ability had long been under consideration. Milwaukee's response to Sputnik was very modest and restrained. Vincent pointed out that American education emphasized the importance of educating all children. A board member noted:

> As a mother, I am very concerned because of all this talk about Sputniks and sciences, and it seems as though the entire philosophy of education is education for destruction and I hope we never get to the point where we forget here in Milwaukee we are educating for safe living. (Minutes, January 7, 1958, pp. 24-25)

The Milwaukee Board of School Directors received several proposals for curriculum change from the public in this period beginning in July of 1955 and ending in June of 1959. In each case Superintendent Vincent maintained that the proposal was an unwise modification of previous policy and not in the best interest of Milwaukee's children. In each case, his decision was upheld by the Milwaukee Board of School Directors. As a result of these decisions the school district refused to:

1. Endorse the Dean Carroll television program (Minutes, January 3, 1956);
2. Promote student participation in an oganization called Youth for All Nations (Minutes, June 19, 1956);

3. Allow Norman Backus of Curtis Sales Company to have students sell subscriptions as part of their classroom learning experience (Minutes, March 26, 1957);
4. Begin an after school bowling program (Minutes, January 6, 1959).

In each of these instances, Superintendent Vincent maintained that the school system should not be used as a vehicle for promoting outside interests and his judgments were respected and affirmed by the Board. All of the community initiated curriculum proposals made in this period were rejected by the Board.

Perhaps the most controversial curriculum matter of this period was a proposal by the Principals Council to eliminate exemptions from final examinations. This departure from tradition was met with strong Board and community resistance. Even though some board members felt such a change was an administrative matter, most Board members disagreed and the exemptions from final examinations were retained in a modified form. The exemption matter was unusual in that it represented a departure from a strong understanding that curriculum matters were matters to be left to the professional staff. Although community representatives and the Board did not often question curriculum policy in this period, the exemption matter illustrated the potential influence of the community in curriculum matters. This discussion also indicated the type of curriculum issue important to the public and how community interest could ignite Board concern and eventually cause the

administrative staff to reevaluate a policy recommendation. It should be emphasized that, generally, the Board and public accepted curriculum proposals with a minimum of discussion. Changes in traditional policies, such as the discontinuation of four-year-old kindergarten and the elimination of exemptions, were resisted by the Board although, in the former case, economic necessity dictated curriculum policy. In light of a weak educational rationale, the elimination of exemptions became a political rather than an educational issue and, in this context, opinions of the teachers and the public caused a modification of an administrative policy. However, from June 1955 to July 1959, the exemption question was the only example of a challenge to administrative dominance of curriculum policy. Moreover, in those instances where Board members did become involved in curriculum matters, they did have an impact. Public concern, as in the case of the exemption question, had the effect of causing the Board to closely scrutinize and challenge an administrative recommendation. However, during this period, all community initiated proposals were defeated.

Public Participation--July 1959 to June 1963

James Conant's work focused attention on educational deficiencies in this period but construction of new schools to meet an expanding school population was emphasized. The growth of the Black population was an important development in this period.

Public participation was limited and administrative recommendations dominated the process of curriculum formation. The Board generally gave strong support to its administrators, although a small but vocal minority began to challenge prevalent curriculum philosophy, especially as it affected Black students. Generally, optimism prevailed as exemplified by Superintendent Vincent's confidence that a Ford Foundation grant would solve the problems of educating disadvantaged youth or, as he stated:

> I might tell you that we have been working on it in our curriculum department for the last two years and we are at a place now where if we can get $50,000 from the Ford Foundation we can really move ahead and clean this up, I think, in short order and make a contribution to public education in the major cities throughout the entire United States. (Minutes, July 28, 1959)

Spanish Television Instruction

The tranquility of Board policy deliberations was temporarily shattered in 1960 when the administration proposed that elementary school children be given Spanish lessons by televised instruction. The Elementary Curriculum Planning Council had studied the feasibility of foreign language instruction in elementary schools in 1955 but had tabled the idea because of financial considerations, shortage of teachers, and a lack of time in the already crowded elementary school day. Superintendent Vincent's memo to the Board noted that the urgency of teaching foreign language had increased since a 1955 study. Spanish was chosen as the language of instruction for this course because it was the predominant foreign language of the western hemisphere and

correlated with the social studies curriculum at the fifth and sixth grades.

This proposal was met by vehement protests from various German societies. Members of these groups made extensive presentations at meetings of the Committee on Appointment and Instruction. The initial protests were followed by letters and petitions which reflected the emotioinalism generated by this issue. One letter characterized the proposal as "cultural suppression of the German majority in this area" (Dudey, Minutes, April 29, 1960). Another letter stated:

> I should also advise you that we in Milwaukee are American citizens and we will vote. The idiotic idea that destruction of German culture is in some manner "building a culture" can only lead to a generation of hoodlums that will make this present generation of juvenile delinquents look like pansies. I personally attribute the disgraceful condition of the moral character of our youth (to) the misguided efforts of people like yourselves who have followed the police state methods of cultural suppression of the younger generation. (Minutes, April 29, 1960, p. 2).

The Committee on Appointment and Instruction tabled the proposal in March of 1960. On April 26, 1960, the administration proposed five choices:

1. not offering elementary school foreign language instruction;
2. the original recommendation to offer Spanish;
3. the substitution of another language;
4. offering Spanish and French; and
5. offering German language instruction.

After extensive debate a letter supporting German instruction was placed on file, an action which made further consideration unlikely.

Eventually the Committee on Appointment and Instruction endorsed the original administrative proposal, agreeing with supervisory staff representative Anthony Gradisnik who mentioned that Spanish best fit the curriculum for the elementary grades. Thus, after long hours of emotional debate the issue was decided on the basis of educational considerations. It is interesting to note that, when challenged, the administration carefully reviewed a number of alternative possibilities that allowed the Board committee to make a choice. The Board committee made its decision based on their consideration of educational policy.

Revision of the Junior High School Curriculum

The proposal for a new junior high school curriculum was presented to the Committee on Appointment and Instruction on March 29, 1960. The major change was to increase the amount of time spent on language arts instruction. Less time was to be allowed for art instruction and science was to be deleted at the seventh grade level so that students could either study a foreign language or receive remedial instruction, depending on individual needs. Science was required in eighth grade and a number of "optional" subjects were to be made available. In the ninth grade the proposals required students to take language arts, mathematics, and physical education while the remaining credit requirements could be satisfied by choosing from a list of optional subjects.

These proposals generated widespread community concern and considerable community resistance. The Milwaukee Sentinel reported in the April 7, 1960 issue that Director Frederick Potter had received numerous phone calls and letters about the dropping of home economics and manual arts courses. This false notion had been circulated by an erroneous article in a neighborhood paper and apparently aroused strong reactions. Director Potter stated that many parents felt that the proposals favored the 20 percent going to college over the 80 percent whose formal education would be completed upon high school graduation. Director Edward Krause also felt that manual arts were needed in an industrial community and protested the teaching of "fringe things" and taking away time from "something basic." Despite assurances by Director Holmes and the administration that manual arts was still in the curriculum, the sentiment against these proposals was strong enough to cause the Committee on Appointment and Instruction to send the proposals back to the administration for further study.

The junior high school curriculum revision proposal was reconsidered by the Committee on Appointment and Instruction in February of 1961. Prior to the meeting, Board members had received an informal briefing on the proposal. After the briefing, Assistant Superintendent Teel responded to Board members' suggestions and changed the proposal to allow remedial instruction in place of certain other subjects. The February 28, 1961 meeting of the Committee on Appointment and Instruction began with a presentation by George

Friedrich of the superintendent's staff. Mr. Friedrich explained that the proposals had been made after staff review of a survey of practices in 23 major cities. Dr. Teel added that very thorough studies of the professional literature, extensive consultation with Milwaukee junior high school principals, and discussions with other administrative staff members had preceded the proposal. Dr. Teel explained that all of these sources had been used to draft proposals which were consistent with a philosophy of providing for:

1. continuing instruction in academic areas;
2. remedial instruction;
3. adequate instruction in health and physical education; and
4. a good balance of exploratory experience.

He also emphasized the importance of the MPS philosophy that the junior high school curriculum should be flexible enough to allow students to explore a variety of different subjects. He characterized the proposal as a step toward strengthening the junior high school program. The discussion which followed Dr. Teel's presentation provided an interesting illustration of changing teacher perceptions of the process of curriculum formation as well as community and Board attitudes which reflected the impact of the writings of James Conant.

As the February 28, 1961 meeting of the Committee on Appointment and Instruction continued, Alan Wilson, representing the Milwaukee teachers' organization, asked whether teachers had been given a role in proposing changes. Dr. Teel replied that teachers had not had a direct

role in proposing changes, but had been consulted by principals. Wilson noted that although he had been invited to an informal meeting of school officials, teachers had not had direct involvement. He observed, "At times the staff will get the feeling that things are just happening up on top, and then here it is, do you like it or don't you?" He went on to strongly recommend teacher participation in important curriculum decisions. In this way he felt teachers would feel more involved in the curriculum and be more responsibile for making it succeed.

As testimony continued, Director William Hintz questioned whether mathematics requirements for ninth grade met Conant's recommendations for high school mathematics. Dr. Teel replied that Conant's requirements were more stringent in the areas of mathematics, science, and foreign languages. However, he also observed that Conant's recommendations were for college bound students who normally took more math, science, and language than outlined in the minimum requirements. In the course of public testimony, Mrs. William Plewe criticized the freedom allowed in the new curriculum for student choice of electives. Dr. Teel replied that adding requirements cut down on opportunities for students and their parents to select special subjects. Mrs. Plewe maintained that a specified number of required courses assured students of receiving some "minimum of education" (Minutes, February 28, 1961, p. 26). Superintendent Vincent replied that electives allowed the

schools to meet individual student needs. The recommendations were unanimously endorsed by the Committee on Appointment and Instruction.

It is interesting to note that in March of 1961, when the full Board considered the junior high curriculum proposals, Directors, Dreyfus, Krause, and Holmes reported continuing community concerns. However, in 1961 the complaints focused on "watering down" the curriculum and not Conant's recommendations. In reply to this pressure, Director Dreyfus declared, "We employ Teel to take care of the needs of Milwaukee and I have a great deal of confidence in him" (Minutes, March 9, 1961, p. 23). Dr. Teel reiterated his personal opinion that the proposal did not represent a perfect curriculum but repeated his reasons for believing that they were sound recommendations. Finally, the Board passed the junior high curriculum proposals essentially as they had been proposed 11 months earlier. Although both Conant's writings and community feelings had delayed the process of curriculum formation, local philosophy and the recommendations of the professional staff were endorsed by the Board. The delay had allowed discussions between Board members and the administration. As a result of these talks agreement had been reached (Dinges, 1982).

In summary, even though vehement discussion accompanied several proposals in this period, public participation did not significantly influence curriculum policy from July 1959 to June 1963.

Public Participation--July 1963 to June 1967

Desegregation policy discussions dominated these years. Board meetings became well attended and the desegregation controversy brought about extensive media coverage. Much of this discussion focused on the educational inequities between Black inner city schools and white schools. The School Board and administration adhered to traditional policies and maintained faith in long standing practices.

While controversies raged over desegregation policies, relatively little change occurred in the process of curriculum formation. Certain aspects of the desegregation dispute focused on the adequacy of the existing curriculum for inner city children, but the school administration maintained that its efforts were adequate. In response to pressure from a group of civic leaders, the Board engaged the Academy for Educational Development, Inc. to conduct a study of the educational program of the Milwaukee Public Schools. While this study was conducted, and since by this time a desegregation suit had been filed, relatively little happened in the curriculum arena.

There was some controversy over textbook selection in 1964. This relatively short interlude focused on the appropriateness of texts for Black students. The administration maintained that it was looking for adequate texts which were difficult to find. This calmed the controversy. Despite much sound and fury regarding educational matters, only two community proposals for curriculum change were made by the public while three proposals came from the Board. Both

community proposals were defeated. The Board resolutions were about relatively non-controversial matters--appointing a committee to study ways to discourage tobacco use and establishing a Shakespeare theater. When the Academy for Educational Development report was made in 1967, it acknowldged that MPS had made many efforts in the area of curriculum improvement. In general, it cited a need to modernize the curriculum, become more "world oriented", and better serve individual needs. These concerns were left to the new Superintendent, Richard Gousha, who was to assume the superintendency in July of 1967. The community influence on the process of curriculum formation did not change during this period. Although there was extensive discussion regarding desegregation proposals made by the NAACP, a majority of the Board rejected these community initiatives and continued to endorse administrative recommendations.

Public Participation--July 1967-June, 1971

Superintendent Richard Gousha took office in July of 1967, a time of social turbulence in Milwaukee and many other urban areas of the nation. This civic violence came at a time when Black Americans across the nation were demanding equality and an end to racial bias. In response to the demands of Black citizens and a general national trend to ameliorate social inequalities, the federal government enacted a number of programs designed to relieve poverty and social injustice. Associated with the reform mood of the country were the notions that federal programs could improve social conditions and that active

participation of the poor and minorities would help the nation solve its problems. As the nation sought participation of "the common people," the wisdom of "experts" was often challenged.

Newly installed Superintendent Gousha was well aware of the tenor of the times as he planned his recommendations for educational policy changes. Gousha viewed the situation in Milwaukee with considerable concern and identified many aspects of the school system which needed changing. Although he found in MPS a fine uniform curriculum, he felt that the educational program was no longer suitable for meeting the needs of a diverse community. Accordingly, his primary goal was to build flexibility into the process of curriculum formation so that individual schools could meet the differing curricular needs of their school communities (Gousha, 1980).

Gousha formulated the "cluster" system as his vehicle for promoting change in the school system. He proposed dividing the school district into geographical areas, or clusters, composed of a high school and the elementery and junior high school feeding students into that school. Gousha hoped that the cluster system would improve communication among professionals while also serving as a vehicle for involving parents in school matters. In order to promote communication and parent involvement, each school organized a school community advisory committee composed of administrators, teachers, and parents. Cluster-wide meetings were held to promote communication among the schools within the cluster. Ultimately, Superintendent Gousha hoped

that many innovative proposals would emanate from these meetings and thus promote improved student academic achievement. Gousha also hoped that by pairing inner city and outlying clusters he might promote intra-city exchange of ideas. He envisioned that people in the various clusters would become better acquainted and that busing between these paired clusters could be the basis for school desegregation in the event that it was ordered by the federal courts (Gousha, 1980).

The superintendent's sense of urgency was not generally shared by the Board of School Directors and many of Gousha's ideas created concern. For example, some Board members viewed the cluster proposal as a threat to the traditionally strong position of the local school principal while others worried that the cluster system might undermine the neighborhood school policy. Also, Superintendent Gousha viewed the hiring of staff from outside the district as a way of upgrading the quality of MPS personnel. In addition, some Board members disagreed with his advocacy of the reforms suggested in the report of the Academy for Educational Development, Inc. As School Board resistance to Gousha's policies developed, a local journalist noted, "Gousha has gone so far as to tell the Board it can no longer operate the schools as it has been doing--something no superintendent has said to the Board in memory" (Milwaukee Sentinel, May 21, 1968). And as one Board member observed, "This is a conservative town. You don't change things overnight here" (Milwaukee Sentinel, May 28, 1968).

Gousha's curriculum proposals were generally endorsed by the Board albeit in a quite altered atmosphere. No longer were Board meetings marked by the consensus and unanimity of previous years. The Board was often split into factions and "haggling" among Board members became a common occurrence. During the Gousha superintendency, long hearings before a large number of community groups took place on many occasions (Milwaukee Journal, May 31, 1968). It became more common for extended Board discussions to be part of the process of curriculum formation. This emotional atmosphere was further exacerbated by frequent crises in the schools. There were disturbances at several inner city schools over student demands for soul food and the inclusion of Black History in the curriculum. Petitions at Madison High School demanded Black literature (Milwaukee Journal, June 1, 1969). Five hundred students walked out of Fulton Junior High School because they complained of physical abuse by teachers (Milwaukee Journal, October 1, 1969). Concerned teachers at Peckham Junior High School asserted that conditions at the school were not safe (Milwaukee Sentinel, May 17, 1969). The Milwaukee Journal reported on November 27, 1969 that disturbances "with racial overtones" had occurred at Riverside and Washington High Schools.

Superintendent Gousha attempted to implement his ideas during a time of unrest and disturbances in the school system. Ironically, as he sought to increase participation in school decision making he was

beset by complaints from teachers and community members that they were being ignored in policy considerations.

An increased level of direct involvement by the Board and community became evident in this period. Several Board members proposed curriculum revisions through resolutions or even by motions brought forth in the course of discussions at Board meetings. Community groups became more directly involved in the process of curriculum formation in this period and in the case of Black History protests, students influenced the process of curriculum change. Some of this increased participation was encouraged by policies of the new administration, but this administrative thrust was augmented by a growing trend toward community activism.

Student protests concerning the teaching of Black History mirrored a trend for increased activism. In the course of a February 17, 1968 meeting of the Committee on Appointment and Instruction, Director Fredrick complained that textbooks in Black History had been given to students after a riot. Superintendent Gousha stated that his staff had recommended changes in textbook adoption procedures which would allow flexibility in areas where a single text could not sufficiently meet all curriculum needs. One community representative saw the call for Black History as a response to Stokely Carmichael's call to take over schools. Black citizens emphasized the importance of including Black History. The Board granted Superintendent Gousha's request to use supplementary texts meeting individual needs.

The Board became more active in promoting curriculum change in these years. The Board considered drug education in response to a resolution introduced by Board members. In June of 1970, a Board resolution called for a feasibility study "relative to a magnet or specialty concept at secondary levels." Board members also called for the use of lay aides as reading tutors and asked for a review of the educational voucher plan. In response to a Board member motion, a special program was established to deal with disruptive behavior at a junior high school.

Community members also began to have a direct impact on the process of curriculum formation. In several instances, community members participated as advocates for particular programs and succeeded in obtaining implementation of their ideas.

1. In March of 1968, the United Community Action Group brought a proposal for an Interrelated Language Skills Center to the Committee on Appointment and Instruction. This proposal combined teacher training with individualized student learning. The proposal had been developed by the community group with help from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the teachers organization (MTEA), and school administrators. This proposal was passed by the Committee on Appointment and Instruction as well as by the full Board, although Director Mett complained that the function of the Board had been sidestepped.

2. In May of 1968, Lucinda Gordon presented a proposal for providing educational opportunities, as well as health and social services, to pregnant girls. The proposal was developed by a group of central city residents who had spent 18 months as volunteers gathering information about the problem and resources. Eventually, the State Department of Health and Social Services provided a $2,000 planning grant and the Urban League contributed $7,000 toward the project. The committee had also received approval from the Milwaukee Public Schools Coordinating Committee for Titles III and II proposals (Minutes, May 27, 1968). Despite complaints that the Board had been bypassed, and discreet inquiries about whether family planning would be discussed by program participants, the proposal was approved for submission for Title III (ESEA) project funding.
3. In June of 1968, at a meeting of the Committee on Appointment and Instruction, a group of Hawley School parents requested that their school become an experimental school in which special curricula and methods could be studied and demonstrated. The administration responded that it encouraged individual schools to consider innovations in programs and curriculum adaptations to local school populations. Director Donald O'Connell asked why Hawley was receiving special attention. Dr. Teel noted, "I think

one of the factors here is that we have a direct expression from a community group, Director O'Connell, for this kind of involvement and participation" (Minutes, June 18, 1968). In May of 1970, Mrs. Alvarez complained that the Hawley proposal had not been carried out and that the parents had not received proper staff help in planning their proposal (Minutes, May 26, 1970). Soon thereafter, planning began for the implementation of the program in the fall of 1970 (Minutes, June 23, 1970). At the June 23, 1970 meeting of the Committee on Appointment and Instruction, the principal of Hawley School said no further innovation was needed at Hawley because a student teacher program had been implemented. Mrs. Alvarez, representing Hawley School parents, cited the Academy study as supporting her contention that innovation was needed. She noted, "There is a reluctance to accept, at least at Hawley, the new look in Milwaukee schools, that is, the increased parent participation in the education of their children" (Minutes, June 23, 1970, p. 5). She further noted that rising parent expectations had to be met. Eventually, the Hawley staff and parents met to plan the desired program.

4. On June 22, 1971, Jan Schwartz, on behalf of Hartford Avenue Elementary School parents, requsted an Open Education program for their school. The principal of Hartford Avenue

Elementary School, Harvey Manski, felt that additional time was needed so that his staff could adequately research the Open Education approach. Moreover, he felt that time was needed to assess whether the Hartford Avenue Elementary School facility was suitable for an Open Education program. Therefore, the Committee on Appointment and Instruction approved the superintendent's recommendation that the parent request be held in committee pending the completion of Mr. Manski's report.

5. Passing over an administrative recommendation to conduct an "in-house" study, a "broadly based" committee, which eventually had considerable impact on district exceptional education policy, was formed.
6. In response to parent complaints about sex education policies, extended and heated hearings were held. A process was eventually found whereby parents were involved in previewing sex related material.

The Board and community both became more directly involved in curriculum change in this period. Indeed, community advocacy led to the direct adoption of community sponsored proposals. More Board member resolutions (9) and community proposals (21) were made in this period than in the three preceeding four-year periods combined.

Public Participation--July 1971-June 1975

The trends toward greater community involvement continued and accelerated significantly. During these years an atmosphere of social ferment pervaded the country. The Viet Nam War became a focus of controversy and the continuing impetus for civil rights was joined by movements advocating the rights of women and ethnic minorities. Charles Silberman's influential book, Crisis in the Classroom, epitomized the type of criticism leveled at the public schools by a number of authors and, on a national level, education became an object of criticism.

In Milwaukee, the School Board election of 1971 indicated that the Milwaukee public shared the spirit of discontent of the national educational critics. As a result of this election, three insurgents replaced incumbent members. This election came in the wake of a split in the consensus among Board members regarding support of the administration. During 1969 and 1970, disagreements had developed among Board members over personnel matters and negotiating strategy. As a result of these disagreements, five Board members previously committed to supporting the administration had joined the other dissidents to forge a bloc opposing many administrative initiatives (Milwaukee Sentinel, February 15, 1971; Jackson, 1982).

These changes in Board alignment and the election of three new Board members committed to educational reforms created a greatly altered climate for the process of curriculum formation. After the

1971 election, Director Harold Jackson, previously described as uncommitted to either faction, was elected President of the Board. His election was supported by the newly-elected reform-oriented members. Upon assuming the presidency, Jackson appointed several of the newly elected directors to the Committee on Appointment and Instruction, where they were in a position to influence the process of curriculum formation.

In ensuing years the new Board members and like-minded incumbents combined to actively promote many innovative proposals. The new Board shared many aspects of Superintendent Gousha's ideas for reforming the MPS. However, disagreements developed between the Superintendent and the Board concerning the pace of change and the strategies to be employed (Jackson, 1982; Radtke, 1982). Consequently, Board members brought forth more and more proposals, many of which sought to establish priorities which differed from those of the Superintendent. Also in this period, several Board members actively involved themselves in the actual operation of several schools which were experiencing difficulties. An atmosphere of crisis surrounded the schools as evidenced by newspaper articles describing "muggings, thefts, truancy, student assaults, gambling, drinking, drug taking and gang wars" (Milwaukee Journal, December 1, 1971). This tense atmosphere in many of the schools was accompanied by community apprehenesion about a possible desegregation order from the federal court (Radtke, 1982).

The school desegregation suit had come to trial in 1973 and 1974 and a decision was now pending.

By November of 1972, a Milwaukee Journal editorial reported that a majority of the Board was ready to buy out Superintendent Gousha's contract (Milwaukee Journal, November 11, 1972). However, in late 1972, Superintendent Gousha and the Board were able to reach an accommodation which extended throughout 1973 and 1974. In July of 1974, Superintendent Gousha left MPS to assume the position of Dean of the School of Education at the University of Indiana. Dwight Teel assumed the position of Acting Superintendent from July 1974 to June 1975, a year of fiscal restraint and Milwaukee's first teacher strike.

The trend toward widespread involvement of the community and Board in the process of curriculum formation which appeared from July 1967 to June 1971 grew markedly in the early portion of the period beginning in July of 1971 and ending in June of 1975. The tendency on the part of the Board to become actively involved in the process of curriculum formation was particularly pronounced during this period. Board members introduced 42 resolutions dealing with changes in curriculum or policies governing the process of curriculum formation. Parent groups and community organizations also participated extensively in the process of curriculum formation and, at times, students became active participants in the process. Teachers continued to have a prominent role on cluster councils and administratively organized curriculum

committees. The MTEA also became involved in the process of curriculum formation, especially through participation in ameliorating disruptive school situations and by sitting on committees formed to consider curriculum changes. The trend toward wider participation in the process of curriculum formation was a notable aspect of this period.

It should be noted that the mechanisms for Board and community involvement have been traditional aspects of the MPS organization. Under long standing procedures, any communication from any board member, individual or organization was brought to the Board by the Secretary-Business Manager. Communications were then referred to the appropriate committee by the Board president. Committee meetings were the Board's "work sessions" and interested citizens were afforded the opportunity to share their views regarding items on the agenda. At a subsequent meeting of the full Board, communications, as well as administrative proposals, were brought from committees for consideration, along with the Superintendent's recommendation. In previous years, directors had usually discussed resolutions with the Superintendent prior to introducing them, but in this four-year period, Board members' resolutions were frequently introduced without prior consultation and this altered the process of curriculum formation.

The large number of proposals emanating from the Board and community, plus the continuing pressure to help in the ongoing projects such as textbook selection, course revisions, formating Program Improvement Proposals, meeting state mandates, and supervising

instructors, placed extreme pressure on the supervisory staff. Each Board member resolution necessitated an investigation and it became very difficult for staff members to carry on the thorough and time consuming research involved in planning educational programs.

To several of the Board members elected in 1971, delays in receiving reports denoted a lack of commitment to change, while to the Superintendent's staff, the added burden of Board initiated investigation seemed both unreasonable and an indication that their professional judgment was not being considered.

Several patterns can be identified during this period. Administrative proposals for changes were generally accepted while proposals from the Board, community members, and other sources received various treatments depending on the content of the proposal. Those which received administrative endorsement were normally adopted. Many study committees were formed and, depending on the merits of the proposal, the cost, and in many cases political factors, their proposals sometimes were adopted and at other times modified or rejected. Another group of proposals dealing with specialty schools or desegregation matters were not acted upon. Non-administrative proposals for curriculum change can be viewed as political objects in the process of curriculum formation. These proposals were not necessarily endorsed because of educational merit, but rather they were adopted if and when a Board majority voted for them.

In 1974, near the end of Superintendent Gousha's term, the number of proposals for curriculum change abated somewhat, although major proposals, such as the establishment of magnet schools, were still being made. Such proposals reflected a spirit of impatience with what was viewed by some Board members as a "piecemeal" or broken front strategy. There are also indications that by 1974 the Board and superintendent were in disagreement over plans for dealing with desegregation of the school system.

From July 1974 to June 1975, Deputy Superintendent Teel served as acting superintendent while the Board searched for a new superintendent. Monetary difficulties had led to the curtailment of funding for new Program Improvement Proposals by this time and the shortage of funds made the Board and administration take a careful look at which of these programs would be continued. As this four-year period ended, several Board members introduced resolutions pertaining to the formtion of magnet schools. These proposals reflected their desire to seek an organizational direction around which to structure the many curricular initiatives which had been begun in previous years. These considerations, plus the expectation that the federal court would soon render its decision in the school desegregation suit, were on Board members' minds as they searched for a new superintendent during late 1974 and early 1975.

Board activism was a significant influence on the process of curriculum formation in this period as evidenced by the introduction of

42 resolutions. Some of these policies, such as the establishment of a voucher system, were indirectly related to curriculum change. Other Board initiated resolutions were aimed toward policy considerations such as placing more emphasis on reading, establishing a committee to study reading instruction strategies or proposing alternatives to the junior high school organization.

Board resolutions in this period represented an attempt by some reform minded Board members to speed up the process of curriculum formation by imposing their priorities on the administration. These reformers were at times joined by Board members opposed to Superintendent Gousha's policies. To the extent possible, the administration attempted to fit Board demands into the ongoing process of curriculum formation in MPS. When the volume of Board demands became overwhelming, Superintendent Gousha stopped making recommendations and requested that the Board recommend a direction to him. In this manner, Superintendent Gousha hoped to encourage the Board to establish priorities for their requests for change. He was also attempting to support a beleaguered staff which was being assigned to develop report after report in addition to their regular duties.

The Superintendent and the administration responded to Board requests in a number of ways. Where possible, they attempted to fit Board initiated proposals into the normal process of curriculum formation. In some cases, the administration would study a proposal and recommend adoption or implementation as a Program Improvement

Proposal. In many cases, special study committees composed of teachers, community members, representatives of bargaining units, and other appropriate individuals would be appointed to study a resolution and make recommendations. If these recommendations were endorsed by the administration, they would usually be adopted, although the recommendations of some study committees were rejected by the Board pending further study. In cases where the superintendent had reservations about a proposal, he expressed them in his recommendations, or, in some instances, just supplied the Board with the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal. In such cases, adoption was contingent on the extent of support for a resolution at the Board level. In the case of several resolutions relating to specialty schools and magnet schools, proposals were studied for years because the Superintendent felt that these proposals were linked to adoption of a comprehensive desegregation policy.

The great volume of proposals resulted in some frustration on the part of administrators who felt that the Board was usurping their professional task. Heretofore, curriculum proposals had been essentially the domain of the professional staff which evaluated trends and made proposals after studying the potential innovation. Now, certain members of the Board were pushing for rapid change in a manner which did not allow the professional staff time to carefully consider change. Principals, who had previously had an important role in

curriculum consideration, often felt bypassed as the Board and community groups proposed changes.

Committees, Committees, Committees.

Committees of citizens, parents, staff members, and sometimes students became an important part of the process of curriculum formation in this period. Many committees were formed as a result of board resolutions. In a number of instances, these committees made recommendations which were endorsed by the administration and became part of the ongoing curriculum program. In some cases the administrative staff worked harmoniously with these committees. In other cases, the administration was forced to work with the committees because the committee members had the ear of a majority of the Board members. In such a situation, administrative expertise would not necessarily overcome the influence of committee members. Committee deliberation and research often extended over a long period of time, but eventually most produced worthwhile recommendations. Some examples are briefly described to give an indication of the extent of the influence of such committees.

Board Level Policy Consideration

From July 1971 to June 1975, the process of curriculum formation at the Board level differed considerably from previous periods. As indicated, 42 resolutions for curriculum changes or changes in the process of curriculum formation were presented during this period. This volume of board initiated proposals was indicative of the desire

of Board members to directly influence curriculum policy. These Board members had their own conception of what priorities should be established in the area of curriculum. A common thread in their proposals was the notion that a crisis situation existed in the school system as evidenced by school disruptions and community complaints (Jackson, 1982). In order to alleviate the crisis, Board members felt that the pace of educational change would have to be faster and that the curriculum could be improved by offering students a variety of alternatives. They also felt that, if necessary, they were within their rights to intervene directly in crisis situations, as they did in the case of Fulton Junior High School and Washington High School. The Board's desire to be directly involved in situations was further evidenced by their requiring monthly reports on matters which they identified as priority items. By November of 1972, nine of these special reports were attached to the Minutes of the Committee on Appointment and Instruction (Proceedings, November 8, 1972, pp. 241-245).

Superintendent Gousha was not opposed to educational innovation, nor to participation in decision making by the Board and the community, but by early 1972 his staff was overwhelmed by the volume of Board initiated requests. These directives were putting severe pressure on his staff, and it became difficult for him to establish priorities. In order to force the Board to establish priorities, Superintendent Gousha did not attach recommendations to programs for a period (Gousha, 1980).

Rather, he recommended that the Committee on Appointment and Instruction or the Board make a recommendation.

As time went on, extended Committee on Appointment and Instruction meetings, often lasting past midnight, became common occurrences. Eventually the strain of making curriculum decisions at the Board level began to tell, and Director SanFelippo commented ". . . there is nothing that can happen to the whole thing except for the whole thing to fall apart because we're beginning to get to the point where we can't keep up" (Minutes, June 20, 1972, p. 82). This situation eased somewhat after November of 1972, when the Board and Superintendent reached an accommodation regarding the consideration of program priorities.

Unlike previous years, administrative proposals were not automatically endorsed in this period. Long debates and the returning of proposals for more study were commonplace. Disagreements over policy direction were common as the Board, administration, community groups, or committees sought compromises which a majority of the Board could endorse. Because funding was available from many sources, the process worked until 1974.

By 1974, an impasse had developed between segments of the Board and the Superintendent over an organizational framework for diversifying curriculum in the school district. Several Board members had introduced resolutions for various alternative schools, magnet schools, or specialty schools. Board members such as Dinges and Farley

saw these concepts as a means of encouraging desegregation through educational alternatives. Superintendent Gousha maintained that he could not implement any specialty, magnet, or alternative school concept unless the Board gave him policy direction regarding desegregation (Minutes, March 18, 1974). When Superintendent Gousha left Milwaukee in June of 1974, the question of whether magnet or specialty concepts could be implemented was unresolved.

School Sponsored Groups

School sponsored parent groups became quite involved in the process of curriculum formation from July 1971 to June 1975. This trend toward active participation had begun in the first four years of Superintendent Gousha's superintendency as an outgrowth of MPS-sponsored cluster advisory committees when several of these committees participated in the development of Program Improvement Proposals. In the spring of 1970, the Board approved employing security aides at Peckham Junior High School as a response to special needs at that school. At that time, Director Radtke viewed the granting of a special concession to Peckham as an invitation to other school sponsored parent groups to seek special programs for their schools. Director Radtke's prediction proved to be accurate. During the July 1971 to June 1975 period a number of school sponsored parent groups sought special personnel or programs for their children's schools. These requests often came in the wake of disturbances at a school and, at times, parent groups bypassed the administration and

took their concerns directly to the Board. During this four-year period, parent-community groups from the following schools sought special consideration from the Board: Fulton, Riverside, Lincoln, Packham, Steuben, Washington, Edison, Peckham Annex, Townsend, Grant Street, Auer, McKinley, Kosciuszko, 21st Street, Muir, Rufus King, 38th Street, and 37th Street. Generally, these school-based committees were successful in securing curriculum modifications for their school, especially if they were persistent, politically sophisticated, and had a problem situation at their school.

Curriculum Proposals Initiated by Community Groups

Community groups became involved in the process of curriculum formation in MPS. They became involved both as proposers of specific curriculum changes and as advocates for changes proposed by other groups or people. Long, often emotional hearings and extended discussions are distinguishing characteristics of the curriculum consideration process triggered by these community group proposals. Whereas in the past, such unsolicited suggestions were rarely given serious examination, in this period community participation did affect curriculum change. Examples of such change are the Expansion of Educational Experiences program which was begun at the suggestion of a university student representing an ad hoc committee. Similarly, revisions in the deaf education program were brought about by a group of interested parents of deaf children. Extended and heated

consideration was given to Sherman Park Community parents who sought integrated schools in their area. Although their proposals were not adopted, substitute proposals from the administration did bring about changes similar to those sought by the parents group.

Student Involvement

To a limited degree, students became involved in the curriculum formation process during this period. Students secured advisory seats on the Inter Junior High Council and Senior Inter High Council. A high school student succeeded in securing changes in examination exemption policy. Other proposals sought a city-wide newspaper, a recreational area and the elimination of study halls.

Although administrative policy continued to be the most influential factor affecting curriculum change, other factors became far more significant in this period. The election of three reform-minded School Board members reflected a general spirit of change in the community and nation. Their election helped alter a consensus regarding the process by which non-professionals would be involved in the process of curriculum formation. Hence, School Board members, parent organizations, community groups and students all became involved in the process of curriculum change.

Public Participation--July 1975 to June 1976

A new superintendent, Lee R. McMurrin, took office in July of 1975. McMurrin's initial efforts focused on building links to the community by speaking to civic, political and religious groups.

Realizing that there was uneasiness in the community regarding the imminent settlement of the long pending desegregation suit, discussion centered on concepts which would provide educational alternatives while promoting desegregation. In January of 1976, the Federal Court handed down its decision that the MPS was segregated and ordered the district to desegregate.

McMurrin and his Deputy Superintendent David Bennet sought to structure curriculum around system-wide umbrella concepts. The High Schools Unlimited plan featured career specialty programs. At the middle school and elementary levels, specialty schools in areas such as open education, creative arts, language immersion, Montessori, basic education and individually guided education were situated in the central city. Thus, educational options were used to motivate volunteers for desegregation. Committees of business and community leaders were formed to recommend career specialties. The Committee of 100, a city-wide advisory group of parents and citizens, helped plan the desegregation of MPS. The court order tended to speed the pace of the process of curriculum formation.

Board Member Involvement in the Process of Curriculum Formation

Board level consideration of policy continued to be marked by extensive debate and controversy from July 1975 to June 1976, but the controversy was no longer focused on curriculum policy. Although there was considerable discussion of curriculum approaches, the court order

necessitated a decision and the administration planning process in the form of the city-wide specialty approach provided a formula acceptable to both the Court and the community. Given these considerations, the Board accepted the administration's plans and administrative recommendations regained their pre-eminent position in the process of curriculum formation. In this year, system-wide planning became the watchword and the administration successfully channeled Board resolutions into established systemwide planning procedures.

Citizen Involvement

Planning for desegregation involved many parents and community members in curriculum planning. In March of 1976, the Board approved a community involvement structure which became known as the Committee of 100. Under this structure, each of the 158 MPS schools organized a committee comprised of students, teachers, and parents. School committees sent representatives to cluster meetings, which in turn sent delegates to the Committee of 100. Elementary schools were grouped into "leagues" with each league having a racial balance similar to the school district's. Desegregation plans were given to both the Committee of 100 and planning councils. Recommendations from the planning councils were forwarded to the administration, the Board, and the Committee of 100. Committee of 100 recommendations were sent to the administration and the Board. Recommendations from the community were taken seriously and incorporated into the administration's planning. Citizen involvement was a very influential factor in the

desegregation process in Milwaukee (McMurrin, 1980; Bennett, 1978, 1979; Torsrud, 1982).

The emphasis placed on city-wide planning curtailed the ad hoc citizen involvement which had been prominent in previous years. For example, when a parent committee from Muir Junior High School presented their proposal for special programs, their ideas were referred to city-wide planning groups rather than being considered in isolation (Minutes, April 1, 1976). This form of involvement was well accepted, as evidenced by the comments of Mrs. Gander, who had frequently appeared to advocate curriculum plans. Mrs. Gander found the events of 1976 to be exhilarating (Minutes, February 16, 1976). During 1976, the participation of internal factors such as community members, students, and teachers was channeled into city-wide planning structures designed to facilitate desegregation of the schools. These committees worked closely with the administrative staff, which provided proposals and administrative expertise. Under the overall supervision of Superintendent McMurrin, and the leadership of Dr. David Bennett, Deputy Superintendent, MPS used the court order to involve citizens, teachers, and administrators in a large scale curriculum effort.

Summary Analysis

This study of public participation in the process of curriculum formation in the Milwaukee Public Schools reveals considerable variation in the pattern of public involvement. From 1955 to 1967,

under Superintendent Vincent, public participation was intermittent and limited. Public proposals for curriculum change were rare and generally ignored. The role of the Board was basically to sanction administrative proposals. However, even in these years, public proposals, reflecting the support of a significant constituency, received consideration.

Beginning in 1967, during Superintendent Gousha's tenure, community elements and the Board become far more active participants in the process of curriculum formation. Indeed, in this period the public made a number of specific proposals for curriculum change. The success of these public proposals was often a function of the political sophistication and persistence of the proponents of change. Clearly, public proposals triggered a political process. If a proposal was educationally sound and economically feasable, Board adoption was contingent on the extent of Board and community support available. In the absence of administrative endorsement an often complicated and extended political process ensued. Those proposals which received the support of a majority of the Board were passed while those which were not politically acceptable to the Board were defeated. In some cases community and Board member proposals were modified by Board motions or study committees until they were acceptable to a majority of the Board. Often each issue assumed a political life of its own and a variety of groups and individuals became involved in the process of curriculum formation. A number of proposals were advocated by a small but vocal

constituency (such as Open Education) and were implemented in a particular area of the city. Other proposals for specialty schools were seen as part of the desegregation issue and were delayed until the overall issue of desegregation was considered.

The changes in this period reflected several changing political, social and economic factors. Superintendent Richard Gousha believed in a "broken front" strategy which allowed curriculum change where there was support for a revision. In the course of Gousha's superintendency, there was a split among Board members regarding support for administrative policy and this dissension opened the way for widespread participation. Moreover, the late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of social turbulence in the United States. Activism and political participation were in vogue. Also, economic prosperity made available the funding required to allow extensive curriculum innovation. The combination of these factors produced an atmosphere which encouraged public participation and it clearly had an impact on the process of curriculum formation.

During the early years of Lee McMurrin's superintendency, money was not available for funding curriculum change. Also, the court order to desegregate forced quick decisions, which were orchestrated by the administration. Public participation was funneled through administratively organized channels. Within this context, public input did influence curriculum change.

While this study does not imply that large segments of the Milwaukee community were involved in the process of curriculum change, it does suggest that those proposing change were heard and in a number of cases their proposals were adopted. Given the democratic process, whereby policy is considered by representatives elected by the public, it is not practical or reasonable to expect all public proposals to be adopted. Indeed, extensive lobbying, persistence and political sophistication were needed to secure passage of proposals. Such a process is well within the norms of democratic procedures. For the majority of the period studied, proposals were not made by the public, implying that a majority of the Milwaukee community approved of the curriculum and that the Board and administration were responsive to their views. When the extent of participation rose in the late 60s and 70s, the system did respond. However, the failure to immediately adopt every minority proposal should not be necessarily interpreted as unresponsiveness. Rather, it indicated the obvious--minorities are a minority. When public concerns were expressed, they triggered a long process of consideration and to a significant degree community proposals were adopted and virtually always considered. While the process was long, involved, and painstaking, accommodations were made. The effort required to achieve success might have appeared to participants as unresponsiveness, but may also be viewed as a complex interaction between duly elected officials, bureaucratic mechanisms, and a variety of social, economic and political forces. The lengthy,

and at times frustrating process, may be ascribed to democratic processes which necessitate majority concurrence in the absence of a consensus. The implication is that the label of unresponsiveness, when applied to MPS during the years studied is certainly an overgeneralization. Rather than glibly categorizing a process as unresponsive, critics might more constructively channel their energies toward assuring that public mechanisms are constructed so as to maximize public participation despite changes in the social, economic and political climate.

Summary of Origins of Curriculum Proposals
July 1955 to June 1976

	July 1955 to June 1959	July 1959 to June 1963	July 1963 to June 1967	July 1967 to June 1971	July 1971 to June 1975	July 1975 to June 1976
Administration	9	23	11	58	68	15
Administration with local staff including Section K grievances	0	0	0	2	13	0
Administration & community task force/advisory committee	1	1	0	1	10	4
PIP	0	0	0	36	33	0
Board and administration	1	0	0	0	3	4
Board resolution or motion	1	1	3	11	42	13
Community proposals	2	1	2	9	19	4
Community and local staff	0	0	0	0	3	0
Teachers' Association	1	1	2	1	0	0
Students	0	0	0	1	4	0
Administrtion & state government	0	0	1	3	6	2
Administration w. federal funding	0	6	7	19*	19*	4
Administration with foundation funding	3	2	1	1	3	0
Administration upon recommendation of accrediting agency	0	2	1	0	0	0
Administration & external agency	0	2	4	2	3	3

*This figure does not reflect Title I programs (see Appendix 5).

Notes

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